

In the Claims

Claims 1-22 (Canceled):

23. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing the feed efficiency of animals comprising:

a) administering, to said animals, multiple feedings of a solid feed comprising:

- i) forage, cereal grains, byproducts, or mixtures thereof; and
- ii) an amount of an organism that increases the feed efficiency of said animals;

~~wherein: a) said organism is selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus buchneri*, *Lactobacillus kefir*, *Lactobacillus parakefir* and *Lactobacillus parabuchneri*; and wherein: b) said amount of organism has been added to the solid feed; and c) said byproducts are cottonseed, gin trash, cotton processing byproducts, potato waste, citrus pulp, almond hulls, corn, bran, distillers' grains, peanut hulls, bakery waste, wheat midds, or mixtures thereof.~~

24. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein said organism is *Lactobacillus buchneri*.

25. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein said animals are selected from the group consisting of pigs, poultry, and ruminants.

26. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein said animals are pigs.

27. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein said animals are poultry.

28. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 25, wherein said animals are ruminants.

29. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 28, wherein said ruminants are cattle.

30. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein the solid feed contains an amount of organism that provides between  $10^5$  and  $10^{14}$  colony forming units (CFU) per animal per day.

31. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 23, wherein the solid feed contains an amount of organism that provides between  $10^9$  and  $10^{10}$  colony forming units (CFU) per animal per day.

32. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 23, wherein said forage comprises grasses, legumes, or crop residue; said cereal grain is corn, sorghum, wheat, rye, barley, oats, or rice; ~~said byproducts are cottonseed, gin trash, cotton processing byproducts, potato waste, citrus pulp, almond hulls, peanut hulls, bakery waste, or wheat midds; or mixtures thereof.~~

33. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 32, wherein said forage or cereal grain is whole, chopped, ground, ensiled, cracked, high moisture, or steam-flaked.

34. (Currently Amended) A method of increasing the feed efficiency of ruminants comprising:

- a) administering, to said ruminants, multiple feedings of a solid feed comprising:
  - i) forage, cereal grains, byproducts, or mixtures thereof; and
  - ii) an added amount of an organism that increases the feed efficiency of said animals that is selected from the group consisting of *Lactobacillus buchneri*, *Lactobacillus kefir*, *Lactobacillus parakefir* and *Lactobacillus parabuchneri*;

wherein said byproducts are cottonseed, gin trash, cotton processing byproducts, potato waste, citrus pulp, almond hulls, corn, bran, distillers' grains, peanut hulls, bakery waste, wheat midds or mixtures thereof.

35. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein said organism is *Lactobacillus buchneri*.

36. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein said ruminants are cattle.

37. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein the solid feed contains an added amount of organism that provides between  $10^5$  and  $10^{14}$  colony forming units (CFU) per animal per day.

38. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 34, wherein the solid feed contains an added amount of organism that provides between  $10^9$  and  $10^{10}$  colony forming units (CFU) per animal per day.

39. (Currently Amended) The method according to claim 34, wherein said forage comprises grasses, legumes, or crop residue; said cereal grain is corn, sorghum, wheat, rye, barley, oats, or rice; ~~and byproducts are cottonseed, gin trash, cotton processing byproducts, potato waste, citrus pulp, almond hulls, peanut hulls, bakery waste, or wheat midds; or mixtures thereof.~~

40. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 39, wherein said forage or cereal grain is whole, chopped, ground, ensiled, cracked, high moisture, or steam-flaked.

Claims 41-48. (Canceled)